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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000074

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USPACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/30/2013
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: KNU COMING TO TOWN?

Classified By: CDA, a.i. Ronald K. McMullen for Reasons 1.5 (B,D)

1. SUMMARY: After several days of confusion about who is coming and when, local contacts reported today, Thursday Jan 15, that a 21-strong KNU delegation led by Gen. Bo Mya has arrived from Bangkok. While here, the KNU will reportedly only discuss a cease-fire and Karen autonomy, not the national convention. Some observers think a cease-fire agreement is possible. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) According to Prof. Saw Simon Tha, a leader of the Karen community in Rangoon, Karen National Union (KNU) leader General Bo Mya arrived in Rangoon today at the head of a 21-person delegation to discuss terms with Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt for a KNU-SPDC cease-fire. The KNU delegation is here because of Thai PM Thaksin's initiative to resolve regional conflicts and push forward with regional economic development, according to Professor Tha. Gen Bo Mya is reportedly accompanied by six KNU Central Executive Committee members.

3. (C) According to Professor Simon Tha, who led two delegations of Karen to Mae Sot in late November and again in late December to speak to the KNU leadership on behalf of the Karens in Rangoon, Bo Mya may have the authority to sign a cease fire with the SPDC while on this trip. Prof. Tha said he was optimistic, and feels it likely a cease-fire will be signed. However, Bo Mya will only discuss a cease-fire and steps required for Karen autonomy within a federal union. The KNU is seeking a deal from the SPDC similar to what the Wa have where they keep their own arms, run their own police and jails, and manage their own regional economic and cultural development programs with Rangoon handling national defense and foreign policy. Though PM Khin Nyunt has told Prof. Tha that all ethnic groups, cease-fire or not, will be able to come to the National Convention, the KNU will reportedly not discuss joining the national convention on this visit.

4. (C) COMMENT: According to other sources, the SPDC is now planning January 16-18 for its three-day quarterly general meeting with SPDC members, regional commanders, the cabinet, and light infantry division commanders. This may indicate the SPDC didn't hold the meeting in Dec 03 due to expectations of KNU to reach a cease-fire agreement with the KNU shortly before the New Year.
McMullen